

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W

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P 291411Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9319

INFO USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5734

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, RQ

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE OF 24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO - DEMARCHE TO SYRIA

REF: DAMASCUS 5641 STATE 204749

1. MET WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AUGUST 29 TO REVIEW PUERTO RICAN ISSUE. NOTED THAT CHARGE HAD DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION WITH DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS LAST MONTH AND THAT I HAD SINCE PURSUED SUBJECT WITH OTHER OFFICIALS OF HIS MINISTRY. HOWEVER, CONSIDERED I WOULD BE DOING BOTH THE ISSUE AND SYRIA A DISSERVICE NOT TO BRING THIS SUBJECT TO THE MINISTER'S PERSONAL ATTENTION. HE SHOULD KNOW HOW STRONGLY MY GOVERNMENT FELT THAT BRINGING THE ISSUE OF PUERTO RICO TO ANY INTERNATIONAL BODY CONSTITUTED AN INTERFERENCE IN U.S. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. RECALLED PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT AND STATEMENTS IN PUERTO RICO LAST JUNE AND THE POSITION WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED SINCE 1953 THAT IF THE PUERTO RICAN LEGISLATURE SHOULD ADOPT A RESOLUTION IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE, US PRESIDENT WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE CONGRESS THAT INDEPENDENCE BE GRANTED. PUERTO RICANS HAD MADE THEIR POSITION AMPLY FAVORING COMMONWEALTH STATUS CLEAR IN SUCCESSIVE ELECTIONS AND WE, THEREFORE, HOPED THAT DAMASCUS WILL ACTIVELY SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PREVENT

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THIS U.S. DOMESTIC MATTER FROM AGAIN BECOMING AN INTER-

NATIONAL ISSUE. SPECIFICALLY, WE HOPED THAT IF THE C-24 DEVELOPS A RESOLUTION ABOUT PUERTO RICAN STATUS THAT SYRIA WILL SUPPORT A MOTION TO POSTPONE A VOTE ON IT UNTIL NEXT YEAR.

2. SAID WE ANTICIPATED THE C-24 DEBATE WOULD START THIS WEEK AND THAT AN EARLY DECISION WAS, THEREFORE, ESSENTIAL BY SYRIA REGARDING ITS STAND. KHADDAM PROMISED TO GIVE THE MATTER THE MOST CAREFUL STUDY. HE DIRECTED HIS SECRETARY TO HAVE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER RAFTI REVIEW THE ENTIRE ISSUE AND REPORT TO HIM ASAP

3. KHADDAM SAID WE MUST RELIIZE THAT SYRIA CONSIDERED A PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION TO BE THE MOST FUNDAMENTIAL PRINCIPLE GUIDING SYRIAN FOREIGN POLICY. I REPLIED THE RECORD CLEARLY SHOWED THE HE NEED HAVE NO CONCERN IN REGARD TO PUERTO RICO. U.S. POLICY ON PUERTO RICO HAS BEEN BASED ON FULL ACCEPTANCE OF PUERTO RICAN RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. ISSUE HAS BEEN ARTIFICALLY INFLAMED BY OUTSIDE PARTIES.

4. COMMENT:

CONSIDER FONMIN FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR CONCERN ABOUT C-24 ACTION. SYRIA'S EVENTUAL POSITION AT C-24 REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
MURPHY

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